The REFORMED JOURNAL

ume 4 — No. 2 A Periodical of Reformed Comment and Opinion February, 1954

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A FREE PRESS

One can hardly overestimate the influence exercised by the constant flow of literature which leaves our presses. This influence of course can be for good or for bad. Da Costa once stated that the invention of printing might bring us nearer to heaven or to hell.

In speaking of the Press—the sum total of what is published—we will limit ourselves to periodicals and not consider books. There are daily newspapers which in many places leave the presses twice or even three times a day, and weeklies and monthlies like *The Reader's Digest, Life,* and countless others, which mould the thoughts of millions of readers. In this article we wish to give special attention to papers and magazines published for our people of Reformed persuasion, such as our official church publications, *De Wachter* and *The Banner,* and publications which owe their existence to private initiative, such as *The Young Calvinist, The Missionary Monthly, The Christian Labor Herald, The Calvin Forum, The Federation Messenger, The Reformed Journal, Torch and Trumpet, The Canadian Calvinist, Contact* (Canada) and others of a more local character.

The Press should be *free.* It cannot serve its day properly if it is bound more or less by State or Church or by social and political powers. It should not sell its birthright to capital or labor, or to a public which is hungry for sensation and demands yellow sheets. The Press cannot live and develop if it is not free. It must be able to comment freely on the various events involving State, Church and Society. It must be permitted to give full expression to its viewpoint and convictions and to propagate the principles for which it stands. And where necessary it should be allowed to criticize and correct.

The Press also has its limitations. It must submit to certain laws. Freedom is not license. The Press is called the Queen of the Earth, but this queen may not rule like a dictator or an autocrat. It may be compared to a judge of the Supreme Court. It must have the right publicly to acquit or to condemn. But like the judge it is bound by the laws of the land and must respect and obey them. If it should wield its mighty sword against the State, the government has the right and duty to curb and muzzle the revolutionary Press. What the apostle Paul teaches in Romans 13: 1-4 holds also for the Press.

The Press should be free to move within its God-given domain. It should be sovereign in its own sphere. But it may not trespass on other spheres of life (State, Church, Society) to rob them of their God-given rights and prerogatives. The Press can be compared to a queen or a judge or a warrior with a keen sword; however it is not called to rule, but to serve. It must be a servant of the Most High, a minister of the King of Kings, to minister to man in his various spheres of life, and especially "to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." In that respect it has something in common with the holy angels, the ministering spirits.

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Governments often fear the Press and have often tried to suppress it. When the Nazis occupied the Netherlands, they wanted to dictate to the Press and to use it as a tool to propagate their evil ideology. Editors who did

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A Free Press — Continued

not submit were put in prison and their papers were suspended. Finally only the "underground" could secretly publish a small sheet. Behind the iron curtain the Press is still in bondage. A totalitarian State cannot tolerate a free Press. And also in other countries the Press is far from free. Recently it was reported by the Interamerican Press Association "that only half the nations in the Western hemisphere enjoy a free Press," and "that there is a mounting effort on the part of public officials to destroy the independent voices of editors and publishers." The following countries were specifically accused of limiting press freedom, viz., Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

The Press is in danger on all sides of losing its freedom. Think of the liquor interests which lead many astray by their expensive and attractive ads. Wall Street may not dominate the Press. Neither may the forces of labor, the big bosses of some Unions, compel it to obey them. Our daily papers and magazines should not in the first place be money-making affairs. They should stand for principles and try to give guidance to their readers. It is to be deplored that our periodicals in general are "neutral" and have no true conception of the way in which they are called to serve the public. Hence they generally lose their freedom and become slaves of men instead of servants of God. What we need is a *Christian* Press. Not just a few periodicals which circulate among our own group. We need editors whose voices are heard by the nation and of whom the government takes notice. We as Christians must have high ideals for our Press and show by our example what a truly free Press stands for. Our Press must aim at the glory of God, the coming of His Kingdom, and the performance of His will. The Press must "turn to the Lord." Then "the veil is taken away." "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3:16, 17).

* * *

THE Church like the State often tries to make the Press its tool. This is done especially by churches or so-called churches which bear a totalitarian character. The Roman Catholic Church with its hierarchy is foremost in this respect. Christian Science, with its mother church in Boston, Mass., has its *Monitor*. The Latter Day Saints (Mormons) who in many respects imitate the Roman Catholics, publish *The Deseret News* in Salt Lake City, their Zion. Many Protestant churches in our country have their own official organs, often in the power of dominating, modernistic leaders.

After Van Raalte and Scholte and others led the "pilgrim fathers" of the nineteenth century to the new world, various periodicals were published in our settlements. All of those papers used the mother tongue, which was spoken in the "colonies" for a long time.

The most prominent weeklies were *De Grondwet*, published in Holland, Mich., and *De Volksvriend*, which appeared in Orange City, Iowa. *De Wachter* was the organ which served the Christian Reformed Church, and *De Hope* represented the Dutch-speaking element of the Reformed Church. In Orange City *De Vrije Hollander*, owned and edited by Mr. Van Oosterhout, flourished for some time. Pella's *Weekblad* served Pella and the surrounding territory. Chicago had *Onze Toekonst* in which Dr. J. Van Lonkhuyzen wrote leading articles for some years. In Grand Rapids appeared *De Standaard*, and in New Jersey *Het Oosten*. In Grand Rapids also appeared for a while *De Gids* and *Ons Vaandel*, both bearing a positive, Calvinistic character. Then there were monthlies like *De Gereformeerde Amerikaan* and *De Heidenwereld*, now *The Missionary Monthly*. The Oostfriesians were guided by German papers like *Der Reformirte Bote*.

Not one of the papers mentioned above originally was church-owned and operated except probably *Der Reformirte Bote*. They were all born of the initiative of individuals or groups. In our circles we had no denominational publications. Even *De Wachter* and *De Hope* were owned and operated by associations. It is true, they meant to serve the denomination to which their owners belonged, but their publication was a private undertaking.

Nearly all these weeklies and monthlies which served our people in their mother tongue finally disappeared. Only *De Wachter* survived, while *The Missionary Monthly* still exists using the English language, with a Dutch section.

It is to be hoped that those publications which appeared in process of time in our circles will be collected. It would be a great help for research of the past if at least some copies of the various papers were kept in the libraries of Calvin College or Hope College or in some museum.

It is noticeable that during the first decades we had a Press which was born of private initiative. This Press reflects the mind of the editors and contributors, and also the mentality of the readers. Hence those publications are of great value. They can give us knowledge of the characteristics of the people and of the currents and cross currents of thought during succeeding periods.

We now have two denominational papers, *De Wachter* and *The Banner*.

The Banner at first was the unofficial organ of the Christian Reformed Church. It was bought by a group of men from Classis Hackensack, where it was published as *The Banner of Truth*. As a denomination we owe much to this paper and its former energetic editor, Dr. Henry Beets. *The Banner* was of great benefit to us in our process of Americanization. When celebrating our Centennial we should gratefully remember this.

Some brethren were not satisfied with the editorials of Dr. Beets. They thought it would be better for the denomination to buy the paper and control it. The present writer remembers very well what arguments were brought up at Synod and how finally the deal was made. At the time no one seemingly considered seriously the principle in-

The Reformed Journal

VOLUME IV NO. 2
FEBRUARY, 1954

A Periodical of Reformed Comment and Opinion

EDITORIAL BOARD
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Published each month by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
Subscription price: $2.00 per year
Entered as Second Class Matter at the Post office at Grand Rapids, Mich.
Address all subscriptions and communications to:
THE REFORMED JOURNAL
255 Jefferson Avenue, S. E.
Grand Rapids 3, Mich.

volved. We were led by fear and thought that it was safer to have next to *De Wachter* an official organ of our denomination in the language of our country. But some of us now are convinced that we made a mistake.

* * *

De Wachter and *The Banner* are denominational papers owned, published, and controlled by the denomination, or rather by a Committee or Board, appointed by Synod and incorporated by law. The editors-in-chief are appointed by Synod, and the Board of Publication acting for Synod is the power behind the editorial chair. It manages the affairs of the publications, appoints the editors of the various departments, and judges in doubtful cases about the treatment of certain subjects and the placing of certain articles. One might say that the Board of Publication is the court of last appeal, though of course one might protest its decisions and appeal to Synod. In order to do effective work the Board of Publication must be located in Grand Rapids, Mich., where the publishing house is, and the editors-in-chief are also supposed to live there or in the vicinity.

The main objection to this arrangement is that it is against the principle of sphere sovereignty. It is contrary to God's ordinances for the various domains of life. The instituted Church has its particular place and so has the Press. Each has its own calling and should not intrude on the other's field of authority.

Both Church and Press should seek the glory of God and the coming of His kingdom. They should strive for the same high ideals. And in order to reach their goal they should be of mutual help. There is place for a Press which serves the denomination, as the Banner used to do while still owned and operated by a group of members of the Church. The Presbyterian *Guardian* is also published by personal initiative and is guarding the best interests of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. So are many papers in the Netherlands edited by individual members of the Reformed Churches in behalf of those churches. The local churches or denominations might very well stimulate those papers and give them moral and even financial support. But those church papers, as we might call them, should never attempt to lord it over the Church; neither should the Church rob the Press of its freedom. To intrude on each other's domain is detrimental to both Church and Press.

The Press owned and operated by the denomination is not free. We notice that when we consider the position of the editors. They are appointed and salaried by the Church. They have to submit to certain rules and regulations made by the Church. They have their own ideas which they of course try to propagate, but at the same time they are obliged to represent the Church. They are like the man who tries to ride two horses at the same time, or the man who is called to serve two masters. Scripture tells us that it cannot be done. "No one can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other" (Mt. 6:24). Speaking of horses reminds me of that great journalist, Abraham Kuyper. He was editor of a daily paper, *De Standaard*, and of a weekly, *De Heraut*. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of *De Standaard* he remarked that his paper had been for him like a horse which he rode and which made him reach his goal. His horse was a lively creature, and he knew how to handle his fiery steed. As its rider he was in full control. Suppose that our denominational editor is placed on this horse. Can he use whip and spurs if necessary, and gallop whithersoever he wants to go?—Oh, no! There is a Committee which prescribes the course he has to take, and if they deem it for the best interests of the Church, they take hold of the bridle and lead horse and rider to the appointed place.

It is evident that the denominational Press is not free. Lack of freedom makes it very difficult for a free Press within the denomination to exist and to flourish. By having its own paper the Church becomes a competitor of papers owned and operated in behalf of the Church by members of the Church.

The denominational Press has many advantages. It is the *official* organ and has something like a monopoly on the church news. If only for that reason the members of the church would want to read it. Besides, they feel under obligation to take notice of what the church paper says. Its editorials and other contributions are considered by many to be the stand which the Church takes on various questions. Oh, yes! they know that the editors do not speak *ex cathedra*, though many take it that their voice is the official voice of the Church. Their words carry great weight, for those writers have the confidence of the Church or at least of its majority, since they were appointed by Synod or the Board of Publication! And in addition the denominational Press has the financial backing of the entire Church, while it is almost impossible for the free Press owned by members of the Church and operated in its behalf, to make both ends meet. These editors and contributors usually receive very little or no remuneration for their labors. It often means sacrifice to publish and edit an independent paper.

At the time *The Banner* became a denominational organ it was claimed that it is safest to have a denominational Press controlled by Synod through its Board of Publication. But are brethren of this Board better watchmen on the walls of Zion than other members of the Church who are well qualified to enlighten our people? We are convinced that it is far safer to have a free Press in which the various elements in the Church can give their viewpoint on various subjects. The denominational Press now is so predominant that many voices are silenced, or at least can hardly be heard. And that may cause trouble. You may dam the stream but finally the dike breaks and the water may ruin the country. You can tighten the boiler to such an extent that at last the steam explodes it. Free discussion in the Press is beneficial to the Church. It is like opening windows to let fresh air into a room.

Having a few men appointed by Synod to control our Press and speak for us and to us is apt to lead to one-sidedness. They may propagate certain ideas and steer the ship in the direction which they have chosen. Moreover, this system has a tendency to create a kind of hierarchy, the more so since the Board of Publication and the editors have to live in Grand Rapids, Mich., or its immediate vicinity.

It stands to reason that the instituted Church should not be engaged in the publishing business. That does not belong to its domain. It may be profitable materially, but it is bound to become spiritually detrimental to the Church.

In conclusion, the present writer wishes to remark that he has no quarrel with the Board of Publication or the editors of our denominational papers. He has no axe to grind. He writes only because he firmly believes that we need a free Press. IDZERD VAN DELLEN

Christian Ethics and the Doctrine of Election

by JAMES DAANE

THE criticism has been urged against Hoeksema's conception of the gospel that it requires that the preacher be able to identify the elect and the reprobate. This criticism is a valid one. Hoeksema's conception of the gospel deprives the gospel of its addressibility. If the gospel-promise is only for the elect, then the gospel can be preached only to the elect. But if the elect cannot be identified—and what preacher can identify them?—then the gospel cannot be preached at all.

Hoeksema's theology first divides all men into two classes of people, i.e., the elect and the reprobate, and then defines the gospel and gospel-proclamation by reference to these two groups. His gospel by this method of interpretation becomes grace to the elect and wrath to the reprobate. His gospel is *for* the elect and *against* the reprobate. This says Hoeksema is the meaning of the antithesis.

The theology of the Christian Reformed Church as expressed in the Three Points of 1924 repudiated Hoeksema's position. It refused to interpret the gospel and gospel-proclamation on the basis of an absolute distinction between the elect and reprobate. This does not mean that the Christian Reformed Church did not recognize an absolute distinction between election and reprobation. But it does mean that she refused to interpret the gospel and gospel-preaching in terms of this absolute distinction. It contended that the gospel is not only *for* the elect, but that it is also *for* the reprobate. It denied that the gospel is simply *against* the reprobate. Therefore it taught that the gospel offer is grace also for the reprobate; the general offer of the gospel is a well-meant, gracious offer.

Consequently it must be said that the Three Points rest on a repudiation of the position that God's attitude in the gospel, and the Church's attitude as expressed in its task of gospel-preaching, can or may be defined on the basis of the absolute distinction between election and reprobation. It emphatically repudiated the position which holds that God's attitude toward the unbelieving world and the Church's attitude toward the world can or may be defined in terms of the absolute antithesis.

This position has nothing to do with theological Liberalism or Modernism, as some seem to think. The Christian Reformed Church did not and does not deny the absolute difference between belief and unbelief, regeneracy and unregeneracy. The difference between these is not relative but absolute. But the Christian Reformed Church insisted that this absolute difference may not be used as a double reference point for interpreting the gospel and gospel proclamation. And it insisted that while the position it maintained against Hoeksema had nothing to do with Modernism, it did have very much to do with the gospel of grace.

This position of the Christian Reformed Church ought to be clearly seen and understood—especially when we define and work with the doctrine of the antithesis. When we preach and urge the application of the antithesis, we ought to understand our own position clearly, so that we clearly see the difference between our position and those of Hoeksema and of Modernism, and that we confuse it with neither. For our view of the antithesis is antithetically related to both Hoeksema's view of the antithesis, and to the Modernist's denial of the antithesis.

We as a Church believe in an absolute antithesis. To be sure. We believe that there is an absolute difference between belief and unbelief, sin and goodness, regeneracy and unregeneracy. And it should be added that we will becloud clear doctrine and take a long step toward modernistic religious thinking if we beat a retreat into a fog-bank and say that we believe in a "fundamental" but not an "absolute" antithesis. Such a distinction does not distinguish truth from error. We indeed believe in an absolute antithesis. But we do not believe that God's attitude of grace as expressed in the gospel, and the Church's attitude toward the world which must be a reflection of the gospel she proclaims, can or may be interpreted in terms of the absolute antithesis, or what is the same thing, in terms of the equal ultimacy of election and reprobation. The theology of our Church as expressed in the Three Points of 1924 repudiates the position that the attitude of either God or the Church toward the world may be defined on the basis of the absolute distinction between election and reprobation. It therefore also repudiates both the theological and ethical method which divides all mankind into elect and reprobate and employs the absolute distinction between election and reprobation as determinative of God and the Church's attitude toward the world. Our theology denies that the absolute antithesis may be so used either in our Theology or our Ethics.

A Plea for Consistency

CHRISTIAN *Ethics are grounded* in Christian Theology. As a Theology differs, its Ethics will differ. A Christian Reformed Theology which supports the Three Points should possess a different Ethics than the Protestant Reformed Theology which denies them. The respective Ethics must differ as widely as the respective Theologies. Yet many would be hard set to show the difference between the Protestant Reformed conception of the Christian's attitude toward the world and our conception of the proper Christian attitude.

If a Church's Ethics must correspond to her Theology, why would many be hard set and why would some even deny that there is a difference between Christian Reformed and Protestant Reformed Ethics? Because we have in a very high degree adopted Hoeksema's methodology in our Ethics. Hoeksema's theology is what it is because of his conception and employment of the absolute antithesis between election and reprobation. But what we repudiated in the area of Theology in 1924, we have adopted for our Ethics. The Synod of 1924 told Hoeksema that it is wrong to interpret God's attitude toward the world in terms of the absolute distinction between election and reprobation. Yet we frequently do the very same thing in the realm of Ethics. In Ethics we frequently use the absolute antithesis as he uses it in Theology. This accounts for the fact that our conception of the Christian's attitude toward the world is almost indistinguishable from that which stems from the soil of his theology.

Why has not this cultivation of Protestant Reformed Ethics on the soil of Christian Reformed Theology been rec-

gnized for the error it is? Because he distinctive feature of Hoeksema's heology has rarely been clearly seen. The oft heard criticism that Hoeksema's heology emphasizes election too much nd is therefore off-balance, betrays hat the critic has never seen the distinctive feature of Hoeksema's theology. Such criticism is only remarkable for ts superficiality. Such a critic has no afeguard against cultivating Protestant Reformed Ethics on Christian Reformed oil.

A far better criticism is that Hoekema's theology is static and timeless. But it has been too little perceived that right at this point we meet Hoeksema's conception of the antithesis. It is Hoekema's conception of the antithesis that it is static and timeless. Therefore he holds that God is only and therefore timelessly for the elect, and only and therefore timelessly against the reprobate. Because he conceives of the antithesis as static and timeless he can maintain that God always and only loves the elect and always and only hates the reprobate. And on the basis of this theological principle the kind of Ethics finds support which claims that Christians are *for Christians only* and *against the reprobate.*

Because it has been but little realized that it is Hoeksema's conception of the antithesis that underlies and gives shape to his whole theology, it has frequently happened that his conception of the antithesis has been imported into the area of Christian Reformed Ethics. Unaware of what they were really doing, the importers have smuggled Hoeksema's conception of the antithesis into the sphere of Christian Reformed Ethics and have then insisted that mankind is divided into two hostile, antithetical camps and must be given an ethical treatment that accords with that division. Where these strange ethical fires are allowed to burn on the altar of Christian Reformed theology, there it has also been urged that because God loves with an electing kind of love, Christians must also dispense their love on the basis of election and reprobation. Not to accept this kind of Ethics is said to be a denial of the antithesis. Denial indeed! But only of that version of the antithesis which gives Hoeksema's theology its characteristic feature!

"Two-Camp Ethics"?

MUCH has been written of late to the effect that a Christian's ethical attitudes must be such that they *fit* the other man. If he is an elect, then the Christian will bring one set of ethical attitudes into play, if he is a non-elect, then another set. Before he dispenses his love or spirit of opposition, before he decides whether he is for or against the other man, the spiritual identity of the other man must be ascertained. Whether a Christian is to be *for* a man or *against* him is to be determined, it is urged, in the light of whether he is a Christian or non-Christian, regenerate or unregenerate, brother in Christ or mere neighbor, elect or reprobate. Identification first! Then the administration of ethics!

This view of Ethics assumes that we can and must divide all mankind into two groups, and then on the basis of this distinction dispense our ethical attitudes of being *for* or *against.* While it must be urged against those who hold this view of Ethics—as it has frequently enough been urged against Hoeksema—that it is impossible for us to identify the elect and the reprobate, it must also be asserted that it is not impossible or even difficult to identify this ethical principle as the very principle held by Hoeksema and repudiated by Christian Reformed Theology. It is a singular blindness indeed that cannot recognize the ghost of the long-time repudiated theological principle staking the house of our Ethics.

Does the Bible teach us to divide all mankind into two groups, the elect and reprobate, the good and evil, the regenerate and unregenerate, brother-in-Christ and not-brother-in-Christ, *for the purpose of determining and dispensing our ethical attitudes and responses on the basis of this division?* Theologies constructed on the principle of the equal ultimacy of election and reprobation, answer this question in the affirmation. In the realm of Theology this means that God has grace for the elect only, and has only wrath for the reprobate. In the realm of Ethics this means soil for the view that Christians must dispense two sets of ethical responses, one set for the regenerate elect and another for the unregenerate reprobate. But the Bible answers the above question in the negative. It denounces an Ethic that cries: Identification first! It condemns the principle that the Christian's love must be dispensed on the basis of elect and reprobate, regenerate and unregenerate. It teaches that such an Ethics is a distortion both of the nature of grace and of the doctrine of election.

Love Your Enemies!

DOES the Bible teach that we must *first discriminate* between men and *then* dispense our ethics? The biblical answer is always, No. Consider, for example, the well-known "love your enemies" passage (Math. 5:43-48). Jesus says to his disciples you have been taught by your religious leaders to love your neighbor but to hate your enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemy. From Lev. 19 we learn that Moses had taught the Israelites, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Who was the neighbor? Anyone. He could be a fellow Jew—regenerate or unregenerate, no matter. Or he could be a non-Jewish stranger in the land: "And if the stranger sojourn with thee in thy land . . . the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." Why love the stranger as thyself? Because he is regenerated? Nay. But rather love him "for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt (Lev. 19:33, 34)."

The Jewish leaders had corrupted this commandment of God. They dropped the "as thyself," and merely taught: Thou shalt love thy neighbor (Math. 5:43). Why? Because this enabled them to ignore the intensity of love demanded. Moreover, by dropping the "as thyself" they made it possible to discriminate between men, between the neighbor and the non-neighbor, i. e., the enemy, *and having thereby divided mankind into two groups the way was opened for the unbiblical teaching that different ethical attitudes should be directed to the two groups.* Having corrupted the commandment, they could now teach love the neighbor but hate the enemy, salute the brethren but not the non-brother, and love the one (the good man) who loves you, but do not love the one (the evil man) who does not love you (Math. 5:46, 47). Against this teaching of two sets of ethical attitudes toward two groups of men, Jesus lifted up his voice and said, But I say unto you, love the second group

as well as the first group! Why? Because God himself makes no such distinction but sends his rain and sunshine on both the just and the unjust, on the evil and on the good. Make distinctions, divide men into two groups when you dispense your ethics, then you are not like the Father in heaven, but like the publicans and Gentiles, for they discriminate in their ethics between men and love those only that love them, and salute those only that salute them.

Does Jesus deny the difference between the godly and the ungodly? Observe well! He recognizes the difference between the good and the evil, the just and the unjust. How can you tell the difference between the good and the evil? It is simple! The evil pelicans and sinful Gentiles have two sets of ethical attitudes toward the two sets of men they have created by discriminating between man and man! These are the evil men, for they have corrupted the teaching of Moses that men should love their neighbor—whoever he may be, whether good or evil—as they love themselves.

Moreover, Jesus here clearly teaches that if a Christian divides mankind into two groups and has for each group a different set of ethical attitudes, *the Christian is thereby in the realm of Ethics denying the profound difference between the Christian and the non-Christian, the regenerate and the unregenerate, for the Christian is then not conducting himself ethically like the Father in heaven, but like the publicans and Gentiles.* "Do not even the Gentiles the same?"

It is not the refusal to discriminate between men when dispensing our ethical responses which constitutes a denial of the difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate, but the insistence that we must divide men into two camps when dispensing our ethical responses that constitutes such a denial!

Positing two sets of people and dispensing two sets of ethical responses, is an ethical denial and confusion of the difference between the elect and the reprobate, the regenerate and the unregenerate. *And this ethical denial and confusion is not unrelated to the difficulty that adheres to Hoeksema's conception of preaching.* When Hoeksema preaches the gospel of the Promise (which he contends is for the elect only), he must assume that he is speaking to the elect and not to the reprobate. But such an assumption in the realm of preaching is also a practical denial and confusion of the difference between the elect and the reprobate. Both the ethical and the practical-preaching denial and confusion of the difference stem from the same source: the application of Hoeksema's conception of the antithesis to God's attitude of grace (Theology) and to the Christian's attitude toward his neighbor (Ethics)!

Love the Stranger

WHAT does the Bible teach? Does it teach that we must first identify a man, classify him as elect or reprobate, regenerate or unregenerate, brother in Christ or non-brother? Quite the opposite! Jesus in the judgment day will say to the righteous, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom . . . for I was a *stranger*, and ye took me in. This quite agrees with what God said to Moses, "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land . . . thou shalt love him as thyself." And the author of Hebrews exhorts, "Let love of the brethren continue. Forget not to show love to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (13:1, 2)." As Christians we must love the stranger who, just because he is a stranger, cannot be classified as believer or unbeliever.

Did the Good Samaritan first identify the man who was left half dead by the robbers before he extended his loving compassion? How could he, the beaten man was half dead (Luke 10: 30)! The Samaritan was a neighbor indeed and met the demand of the law because he did not love the beaten man *as an elect* or *as a reprobate*, but because he loved him *as himself*. His love was not based on a distinction between elect and reprobate, regenerate and unregenerate. The love he extended was based on "as thyself," and the love-principle "as thyself" excludes the distinction between elect and reprobate, first because no person is both, and second because every person whether elect or reprobate must love the neighbor *as himself*. Only when the "as thyself" is dropped from the love-commandment—as it was dropped by the Jews—does it become possible to divide men into two classes and to dispense ethical responses accordingly—which the Jews did. And it is against this whole conception of Ethics that Jesus declared, But I say unto you!

Ethics and Election

THE Divine act of election separates. It results in two kinds of people. It accounts for the class of men who are regenerated in distinction from the class which is not regenerated. But election is not only an exclusively divine act, it is *specifically an act of grace*. The most significant thing that one can say about election is that it is a matter of *grace*. For this reason it is exclusively an act of God.

For this very reason it is profoundly unethical for the Christian to presume that he too can elect, to presume that he can divide mankind into two groups and dispense his ethical responses accordingly. *When a Christian urges that God loves with an electing kind of love and that therefore he must do likewise, he is denying the very nature of grace.* He is then in his ethics not living by grace. To urge that we must imitate God and dispense our ethical attitudes, our favor and disfavor, our granting and withholding of love, on the basis of election and reprobation, is to presume to be God and to deny that we live by grace. We may not elect and separate in the realm of Ethics. To do so is to make election a human act, a work of the law, a work of human righteousness, and this constitutes a distortion of the very meaning of grace. Election is grace because it is exclusively God's act. But election as an ethical act of man is precisely not grace, but human righteousness. For this reason an Ethics which urges that we must love with an electing kind of love is a Pharisaical kind of Ethics. Indeed, it was the Ethics of the Pharisees.

In sharp contrast with the Pharisaical brand of Ethics which contends that because God loves with an electing kind of love Christians must also love with an electing kind of love, a Christian Ethics does not elect. Precisely because it is an Ethics of grace, Christian Ethics does not divide mankind into two groups in order that it may love the one and not the other, in order that it may be *for* the one and *against* the other. The difference between a Chris-

an Ethics of grace and a Pharisaical thics is as great as the difference beween salvation by grace and salvation y works, between Christian humility nd self-righteous pride.

A biblical Ethics of grace, does not lect. An Ethics which elects, is not an thics of grace—else grace is no more race.

A Theology which so uses the doctrine of election and reprobation that s gospel cannot be preached to every reature, to every particular man and o all men indiscriminately, is a theology which has distorted the grace of he gospel. Similarly, an Ethics which o uses the fact of election and reproation that it cannot without discrimination dispense its ethical attitudes and esponses, is also a distortion of the race of God.

A Theology built on the principle of he equal ultimacy of election and repobation distorts the meaning of grace, ecause it has distorted the meaning of lection by its equation of election and eprobation. And the theory of Ethics vhich grows on the soil of such a theology, also distorts the meaning of race because it has distorted the meaning of election. A truly Christian conception of Ethics is grounded in the biblical understanding of election as an act of divine grace.

The Jews did not understand election because they did not understand grace. Dividing mankind into two groups, they contended that they were God's elect and that the Gentiles were reprobate. This misunderstanding of election led *not* to a *national-Jewish* righteousness, but to a *self*-righteousness. Consequently they rejected Christ not because he was a Gentile, for he was "the glory of Israel" and the righteousness of God that was of the Jews according to the flesh, but because Christ conflicted with their *self*-righteousness. Christ was Jewish enough. He was their brother according to the flesh. Christ was not a Gentile who conflicted with a national-Jewish righteousness, but a fellow-Jew who conflicted with their *self*-righteousness.

For a theology of election which draws a line between any two empirical groups of people, whether between Jews and Gentiles or between Church and world, is a theology that must continue to draw lines until it finally draws a line not only between one group and another but *between the self and the other members of the same group.* Thus each Jew was led by his understanding of election to draw a line between Christ as the righteousness of God and himself and his own self-righteousness. It was the Jew's understanding of election that kept him from loving Christ his brother according to the flesh, *as he loved himself.* And it is this same understanding of election that led the Pharisee to thank God that he was not like other men, not even like the Jewish publican. It was this understanding of election that exalts the self against all others that prompted him to drop the "as thy*self*" from the Love-commandment, to distinguish between Jew and Gentile, to discriminate *within Jewery itself* between neighbor and enemy, between himself and all other Jews, including the Christ.

The Jewish understanding of election led them to divide mankind into two groups and to contend that God has grace *for* the Jews but *not for* the Gentiles. This corruption of the doctrine of election led both in Theology and in Ethics to the point where the indvidual Jew asserted his own self, not merely against the Gentiles, but against every other Jew, even against Christ, for the purpose of asserting his own *self*-righteousness—which was a profound denial of the meaning of election and the nature of grace.

When Paul discusses election in the tenth chapter of Romans he warns the Gentiles lest they commit the same sin and in their high-mindedness draw a line between themselves and the Jews and boast that God is now *for* the Gentiles but *against* the Jews, and he adds the further warning that if they do so they will also be cut off and rejected of God. For the Gentiles no less than for the Jews such a theological and ethical conception of election is a distortion of election and a distortion of the meaning of grace.

* * *

A Theology built on the equal ultimacy of election and reprobation nourishes an Ethics that divides between man and man. Such a theology and such an ethics is *essentially divisive.* And a Church which believes in such a Theology and lives by such an Ethics, is a Church that will be rent by a never-ending process of divisions and schisms.

Election verily divides, but it is exclusively God's act. When men presume to elect and prescribe that Christians must love with an electing kind of love, they advocate an Ethics which is a denial of the biblical Ethics of Election. When men divide between man and man *they do not in fact draw a line between the Church and the world.* They become divisive and tear the Body of Christ.

"Reformation theology has not known a second quickening (elan) in the higher sense of the word. She has worked out more minutely what was at first treated only in vague terms. She has furnished rich detailed studies. With hair-splitting exactness she has picked apart almost every conceivable antithesis, with the Lutherans as well as with the Reformed. And especially in exegesis and in Church history she has continued to gather her laurels, but as *theology* she has remained stationary; and when the stream of churchly life has flowed away from under her, she has finally proved to be an expanse of ice that could not be trusted, and that broke and sank away the moment Philosophy threw itself upon her with all its weight."

—Abraham Kuyper, in *Principles of Sacred Theology,* page 668.

The Christian Duty Toward Society

by GEORGE STOE

IN a previous article (*Journal*, Sept. 1953), I suggested that we are in need of a definitive statement of the Christian social objective. I venture a statement now. I do not presume that it is *the* answer. But perhaps it at least points the direction in which the answer might be found.

What is the Christian's social task? Maybe if we more clearly define the What? we shall better know the How? —at this moment a quite moot point.

The Social Goal

WE ought to begin by saying a thing generally acknowledged—that the Christian's social calling is the Christian's obligation to do his part for the ordering and functioning of the life of this present world and society. The common life of our present society is the particular object of *social* endeavor. And, if I may repeat myself, the Christian's social duty is "to participate in the life and task of human society, to recognize his responsibility with respect to the ordering and functioning of its life, and to exert his influence as a Christian upon that life to a good and proper end."

This brings up the crucial question: What is the good and proper end of social endeavor? Or, What is needful and good for the common life of our world? We should be able to find a concrete answer from the Bible, because the Bible gives some indication of God's relationship to this present world and society and what He intends to do with it.

From the Bible it would seem that God does not intend a program of reconstruction by which our society is to be transformed through Christian endeavor into a Christian society. The Bible seems rather to indicate that God intends with longsuffering and goodness to preserve this present world until the time He has set for its destruction and the creation of the "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

This fact has some bearing on the Christian's own relationship to this present world and his duty with reference to its life. And in consideration of it, it seems hardly right, even as a counsel of perfection, that we should intend more with this world and its life than God intends. Nor does it seem right that we should lay upon ourselves a task which God Himself does not assume. There are limits set upon our social calling, even as there are limits to God's purpose with this present world. The Scriptures remind us of this, sometimes by instructing us negatively, putting a check upon the overzealous ambition to root out all evil from our world. The Lord Jesus does so in the parable of the wheat and tares, exhorting us to "let both grow together until the harvest," when He himself shall see to their separation. Sometimes He instructs us positively, as in the declaration: "Ye are the salt of the world,"—given to preserve, not to recreate or transform, what is already decaying.

Our social task has its limits, therefore, but is not on that account a small one. We shall need much grace for the faithful performance of it. And part of the grace necessary is a recognition of the function that God assigns to our social endeavors—a recognition that the proper goal of social endeavor is what God intends, namely, such ordering of the common life of our world as will make for the preservation of the world's life until He marks the time for its destruction and renewal. And whatever in the way of social effort fulfills that purpose and is directed toward the good which God wills for this world is a proper social end for which to work.

There are two considerations, therefore, which ought to govern the Christian in his social effort. He must do what is needful for the achievement of the social goal—the maintenance of the common life of our present society. And in this endeavor he must seek the good that God wills and makes possible for this present world.

The Social Need

IT ought to be noted that what is needful for the preservation of this present world is not the same thing as that which is needful for its redemption and restoration to God through Christ. This distinction is of some consequence for an understanding of the social task. If the proper aim of social effort were that of "building a Christian social order," of "saving" Western civilization, of "reconquering the world for God," it would be necessary to lead all men to a recognition of the Christ as the only Savior from sin, and to a transforming of their minds so that they might in all things be subject to the will of God in Christ. If this were the right definition of the social task, there would be more point to saying that "only those who believe in Christ can do it," and that it is futuile and wrong for a Christian to work through any other than a Christian organization.

But if the right aim of social effort is the maintenance of our common life, it will be necessary to work for those social ends which make it possible. To put it concretely, if society is to stand, and if the world's life is to continue, it will be necessary for men to do what sustains it and contributes to its life. Men will have to work—which is not merely a private exercise whereby one gets a livelihood, but a social duty by which one does his part for the establishment of an economy that serves the life of the community. Men will have to set up government and enact legislation for the regulation and protection of community life. They will have to pay taxes—rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's—so that government may be maintained and needful public services be provided. They will have to engage in scientific study and research, so that the treasures of our world may be fully utilized and the expanding needs of a complex society may be met. They will have to make provisions for community health, protect life against disease, and secure the community against epidemics which endanger all. They will have to support in their needs those who are the victims of poverty, bodily affliction, and public disaster. And in the relations that men sustain to each other in the various aspects of community life, they will have to strive for justice, fair dealing, and a due regard for the rights, liberties, and obligations of the members of a common society.

All these, and others, are things that ust be done if society is to be pre- rved and life in it to be possible and uitful. The discharge of these and e duties is the social task. It is a task at falls upon the Christian, too, and ne which Christians should be the first recognize and discharge, the more since they confess that this is God's orld and that in its own way the main- nance of its life fulfills His purposes.

It would be a mistake, however, to ssume that the Christian is the only ne who can perform this task. The cts quite profoundly belie such an as- umption, and no less the witness of the ible. Whatever achievements have een good and profitable for this orld's life have been the fruits of the ommon effort of men in every land and ommunity—and in most of our social chievements non-Christians have taken ne lead. It is true that Christianity has xercised a powerful influence in the orld's life, elevating and enobling the uman concepts of justice, love, broth- rhood, and individual worth. But this s not saying that all civilization and ocial progress have come only through he efforts of Christians. To say so would be contrary to fact.

The fact is that in His concern for he life of this present world, God has nade even non-Christian men to be His ninisters. They have carried out and hey are carrying out His purposes. That means something for the Chris- ian's relationship to them. There are some of these non-Christian ministers o whom Christians are called to be subject (Cf. Romans 13). And there is reason to believe that it is right to cooperate in a common social task with those whom God has commandeered for and empowered to a needful service for this world and its life.

We ought not, indeed, to be unmind- ful of this relation which even non-Christians sustain to God and His pur- poses. Whether they know it or not, it is certain that God knows it. He has made them do service in and for his world, and has given them His grace to qualify them in their doing of civic and social good. And if God uses non-Christian men and gives them His grace, there is a significant point of con- tact between the Christian and the non-Christian, and a significant basis for common effort in the social task. This would suggest that we ought to be care- ful about refusing to serve with those who do God's service, and careful lest we repudiate the gifts of His grace in those who are gifted with His grace.

The Social Good

THE non-Christian, too, does what is needful for the life of our present world. And it is generally ac- knowledged that in matters pertaining to this life and society he does what is "good." It is sometimes said, how- ever, that the good of the non-Christian is a different good than that performed by the Christian, and that therefore they are never working for the same thing. This, it is concluded, makes co- operation impossible and unallowable.

Still, the non-Christian "good" is a fact, witnessed to by Scripture, and therefore must be explained. Some- times it is distinguished from Christian good as being "not good enough," — a not very significant qualification, since the same can be said of every human good. Sometimes it is said to be only a "so-called good," which seems like trying to deny the very thing we are made to affirm. And sometimes it is called a merely "external good," with- out any suggestion as to how the ex- ternality of the good reduces the "goodness" of the "good."

Isn't it better to hold that if a thing is good, it is good? The only alterna- tive to what is good is that which is bad. If the non-Christian does things that are good, it would seem that we ought to acknowledge that they are good as goodness must be understood. We ought to be ready to acknowledge as good what God affirms to be good, the more so since that good is known to be the fruit of God's grace, out of which can come only good as God knows and wills it. It is not certain, indeed, that we have a right to say that the "good" of the non-Christian is only a "good" that is the fruit of humanistic, rationalistic assumptions. That gives too much credit to the non-Christian and his assumptions. The good of the non-Christian comes out of grace of God, and the grace of God does not produce humanism and rationalism. It produces good—the good that God wills.

Therefore, when the non-Christian seeks social justice, he is moved by the grace of God to seek a good thing— which God wills and the Christian should approve. When the non-Chris- tian seeks honest government, he is moved by the grace of God to seek a good thing—which God wills and the Christian should approve. May not the Christian cooperate with the non-Chris- tian in seeking these goods which God wills and to which God by His grace enables them both? I should suppose that in the service of the needs of our society — which is the responsibility and concern of all men in common — the Christian not only *may* but *should* so cooperate.

The CLA has, indeed, made signifi- cant concessions to this consideration. There are non-Christian members in the CLA—which apparently assumes that a non-Christian can cooperate with Chris- tians in working toward certain social ends. And the CLA has declared its willingness and intention to cooperate with the CIO and AFL in working for the removal of racial discrimination in our society. This is right. Christians and non-Christians should work to- gether for good ends in the life of the society which is common to both. And they can, even though they profess rad- ically different creeds, because they are both enabled by God's grace. This does not mean that when the Christian works with non-Christians he adopts non-Christian beliefs and reduces himself to a non-Christian level of morality—any more than the non-Christian CLA mem- ber, or the CIO and AFL, would be thought to adopt the CLA creed and be raised to the Christian level when they join or cooperate with the CLA. It means only that both work toward a common social end which God wills and certainly approves. And they do it each according to the grace that is given them.

The Concrete Task

THE ends for which the Christian is supposed to work in his social task are specific and concrete, and relate to the immediate and present needs of our common society. He must work, he must produce and distribute the neces- sities of life, he must seek for himself and his fellows a decent, living wage, he must do what is needed for safe- guarding the rights and liberties of him- self and his fellows, he must seek hon- est and responsible government, he must give help to the afflicted, care for the needs of the poor, he must "seek jus- tice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." The

Duty Toward Society — Continued

doing of these things constitutes his social task, and these are the things to which the Christian is called.

But it is not right to say that he fails in the discharge of his social task if he does not first bring his fellowmen to a recognition of Christ as Savior and replace the humanistic presuppositions in his thinking with Christian ones. To expect this of him is to expect him to do what is essentially the task of the Christian Church and of the evangelical witness of the Christian community. And when a Christian organization is set up for the pursuance of these ends, it is more a confessional organization witnessing to the Christian gospel than a social organization doing a social job. Insofar as it d o e s venture also to achieve certain concrete ends in social living, it does so by separating itself from others to whom the same job belongs. This is neither necessary nor right, for it deprives the Christian of the help of the non-Christian, who is also concerned about and enabled to work for good social ends, and it deprives the non-Christian of the help and the leavening influence of the Christian.

The Christian will, of course, run into difficult problems in his efforts to work along with non-Christians. The problems will arise not from only the humanistic presuppositions of the non-Christian, but also from the selfishness, materialism, greed, and evil that breaks out of every human heart. There is no escaping such problems, not even in an exclusively Christian organization. The struggle for what is right and good and intended to serve the common well-being, instead of a selfish interest is always a hard one. That being so, the Christian may be thankful that God has given grace also to his human fellows to work and sacrifice for such things. And the Christian may well consider that if sin and evil come to large expression in common social organizations, the Christian ought not to let the non-Christian fight alone for what is good, but, with the greater and other grace given him ought to help him against the evil which destroys and toward the good which preserves our society.

The Better Way?

THERE is no question at all about the sincere intention of the proponents of separate Christian organization to provide a way for the better and more faithful performance of the Christian social task. The only question is whether what they propose is the best way or even the right way toward achieving what they seek, I am not persuaded that it is.

The major objection is that by setting up the separate Christian organization the Christian separates himself from his human fellows, with whom he shares the life and blessings of this present world, and with whom he should also share the responsibilities. This kind of exclusivism is neither warranted nor profitable. It prematurely divides men into two separate and antithetical societies. Apart from the fact that it is not yet time for such separation, the prerogative to so separate the sheep from the goats is God's, and not man's.

There is no doubt that the Christian social organization, with its strictly Christian confessional basis, is thoroughly exclusive. It denies to any non-Christian the right or privilege of what is called the right social action, unless he first becomes Christian. This means, as the late Rev. Johannes Groen once observed, a "closed union" which is even worse than a "closed shop." And if, by improbable circumstance, the CLA should become the dominant labor organization, there would be brought into society the reverse of the mark of t h e beast,—non-Christians would be starved out of the world or be forced to live by the charity of Christians, unless they should imitate, in reverse, some early Christians and produce a formal certificate of belief in the Christian God. It is no answer to say that non-Christians may join the Christian organization, because it is said that non-Christians cannot pursue a right, not to say, the Christian, social end; and on a certain interpretation of the antithesis the non-Christian would be an enemy to the Christian cause right within the Christian organization.

God Himself, by the maintenance of our present society, and by the preservation of its common and interdependent life, has made known to us the better and the right way. The significant fact is that God has made life in this present evil world possible for us and our fellowmen, not only by the good which He bestows upon all men in common, but also by giving to even non-Christian men the grace which enables them to do the good and achieve those social goals which make for order, decency, and life itself in our common society.

We ought to honor this grace of God and count it a blessing not only to our world but also to Christians in our world. And we ought to recognize that the grace given to our society enhances the Christian's opportunity for the discharge of the social task. The Christian has, for the service which our society needs, the help of non-Christians — and without it the world and the Christian Church in it could scarcely stand. And the non-Christian, whom God so uses, needs and is entitled to the help of Christians and their greater grace and clearer light.

It is regrettable that the Church has ventured to give official approval to separate Christian organization as the best, and by implication the only right way of Christian social action. For whatever separate Christian organizations may do for the comfort of the Christian or the resolution of his personal problems, it is not clear that they help our society toward the resolution of her perplexing problems. And it is a question whether they help us to rise above our traditional tendencies toward social irrelevance, and whether they do not rather encourage an unwholesome tendency toward separatism.

It would seem better that we should study how we may best discharge our Christian social duty in association with other men with whom we live and work every day. It would seem better, too, that we should help and encourage each other in the task which Christians must perforce carry on in direct contact with the world instead of laying men under suspicion of not being Christian in so doing.

God has put us in the world. It is evil, but it is still His world. And we should not be afraid to work in it, because He is there, and His grace is there too. And it is in the world, not apart from it in the shelter and isolation of an exclusive Christian organization, that we must learn how to be, and grow in being, "the salt of the earth."

When Is an Emergency?

by ELCO H. OOSTENDORP*

THE work of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada since World War II has been generally characterized by the word "emergency." Thus we have the Canadian Emergency Fund of the Home Mission Committee and the Indian Emergency Building Fund under the Church Help Committee. Although not referred to as such the work of the Canadian Immigration Committee is also designed to meet an emergency situation. Study of the interesting map in *The Banner* of January 8, 1954 shows how rapidly the Canadian make-up is changing. This suggests the question with reference to the various aspects of the work: When is an emergency? As the Canadian churches become stronger and increase in numbers some critical needs are met; on the other hand, new needs arise. It is this fact that prompts me to question whether the emergency which called the present Immigration Committee into being is not rapidly passing, requiring Synod to look ahead and plan for transferring the work to a more permanent arrangement.

A Real Emergency Well Met

THE historian of the growth of our Church in Canada will have to give much credit to the members of the Immigration Committee and the fieldmen who worked under it. My remarks in this article are far from being a criticism of the fine work done with unstinting devotion by such men as Rev. P. J. Hoekstra, Rev. A. Disselkoen, Mr. J. Vander Vliet and other members of the Committee. Fieldmen like B. Nieboer, H. A. Wierenga, J. Vellenga and A. Vanden Berg, and others who worked on a part-time basis, have earned a lasting place of honor along with the pioneer home missionaries in guiding this great wave of immigration through the critical years since 1946. To Missionary-at-large Rev. J. M. Vande Kieft too belongs a vote of thanks for abundant labors as liason man between the immigration work and the Home Mission Committee.

Profiting from long experience with the needs of immigrants in Canada the pioneer members of this committee anticipated the needs and set up machinery to welcome the new-comers. The Christian Reformed plan became the pattern followed by others. And Synodical, centralized, action was sorely needed at the start. There were only 14 weak churches in 1949, scattered from Toronto to Vancouver. Although consistories and immigration societies did wonders, they were too weak and scattered to cope with the many problems of the inrushing waves of newcomers. The churches in The States had to lend a hand, and a central agency alone could co-ordinate efforts and make the necessary contacts on both sides of the ocean.

Furthermore, there was very little governmental planning or assistance. Supervision of immigration policies had not yet found its present well delevoped channels. Farmers had to learn how to deal with the new hired hands; many were ready to exploit the Dutch; others had to be pursuaded to give them a try. Centers had to be found which promised a future for the growth of churches and communities. Above all, the immigrants were desperately poor, since Dutch monetary policy permitted them to take very little money or personal property along, and wages averaged about $75 a month. The new arrivals were truly strangers in a strange land, without friends or relatives, unfamiliar with language and customs, often far from church or contact with fellow believers.

"I was a stranger and ye took me in," says our Lord in Matthew 25. That was the blessed task of the Immigration Committee, working through its fieldmen, the local immigration societies, and in close cooperation with the indefatigable immigrant pastors. One has to have intimate knowledge of the situation to fully appreciate the magnitude of the emergency, and how well it was met, by God's blessing, upon good work by the right men in the right places.

In What Sense the Church's Work?

THE above has given some impression of the nature of the work done by the Immigration Committee. It is concerned with the material, economic, and social needs of the immigrant. Help is given in meeting the requirements for entry, often involving much legal red tape; sponsors are found; difficulties with employers are ironed out if possible; provision is made for housing and jobs; means are provided for getting to church as long as people have no transportation. All this with a view to keeping Reformed people from scattering and being lost to the Church. The provision for the body is in order to the spiritual welfare of brothers and sisters in the faith who need help in a strange land.

Is this the work of the Church, that is, of the organized Church? Or should it be taken care of by Christian social action, the Church as organism, through so-called immigration societies? The latter have a long and honorable history on both sides of the Atlantic, as e- and im-migration societies, dating all the way back to Van Raalte and Scholte. And from the start there has been close colaboration between the Synodical Committee and the local and broader organizations of the immigration societies. The very fact, however, that both the Gereformeerde Kerken, with their "Deputaten Voor Emigratie," and our Synod with its Immigration Committee, have seen fit to take official action indicates that it is their conviction that the Church may and must take action in this vital matter, and cannot leave it to private initiative. There is a close relationship between the bodily and spiritual welfare of the Church's members. To a certain extent the very existence and growth of the denomination is dependent upon the location and wellbeing of the people.

That being the case, the further question arises, Where does this type of activity fit into the Church's program? Originally the Committee considered itself a subdivision of Home Missions. The prominent place occupied all these years by the Missionary-at-large shows

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When Is an Emergency? Continued

that there is a close connection. But when we go back to principles of church policy the problem is to determine under which of the three offices through which the Church functions in the name of Christ does such work belong? Specifically, when a fieldman does his work as representative of Synod—full-time fieldmen are appointed by Synod—does he act as prophet in a sort of ministerial capacity; as king in virtue of the fact that most of them are also elders; or as priest in the ministry of mercy as a sort of full-time deacon?

When one reads the Form for Ordination of Elders and Deacons, and that for ordination of Ministers, it is obvious that the work done for the social and economic welfare of the immigrants belongs to the diaconal office. The offices can be distinguished but not absolutely separated. There is room for the question which is being studied in The Netherlands: whether deacons should not be delegated to Synod, since Synod inevitably supervises work of a diaconal character. Surely, if the three offices function at the level of the local congregation, it would seem to follow that they also function in the Church working through its broader assemblies.

However, in this connection we need to remember a vital principle of our ecclesiastical policy, namely, the autonomy of the local church, and the need of local action. In other words, Synod should not do what the Congregations and Classes can do. For the best of all concerned we should keep action as close to grass roots as possible. Here, too, the indigenous mission principle is valid; we should not do for local congregations what they can do for themselves. Emergencies call for and justify centralized and remote control, but when the emergency has passed such agencies should prepare to turn the work over to the consistories and diaconates, if possible.

Conditions Have Changed

THIS brings us back to the map of Canada and the statistics for 1954. The emergency conditions described above have changed a lot in the past seven or eight years. True, emigrating from Holland to Canada is still a venture that takes faith, courage and pluck. But the immigrant can now bring almost as much of his possessions as he pleases and can afford. Some are even bringing cars, pianos, and enough money to make a down payment on a farm. These are the exceptions, but they only prove the rule. Moreover, many are being sponsored by friends and relatives who can help them in many ways. No longer are all forced to work at least a year on the farm, but many are settling in the city and making good money. Thus when they do need help many new comers can afford to pay for it themselves, or have relatives and friends who can help them.

Most important of all for my purpose in this paper, there are now many flourishing churches, and groups of churches in centralized localities. These also have deacons, and collect regularly for their work. In some localities the deacons are maintaining immigration homes where new arrivals can find temporary shelter. No doubt quite a lot of work is being done for the extremely poor and those visited by illness, etc. But on the basis of my experience it is my impression that the diaconate is not coming to that measure of development which the challenge of the situation requires. I am thinking, by way of comparison, of what used to be done by the diaconates of Denver for those who migrated West for reasons of health. And it would seem that one factor is the presence of a fieldman, who does the work the deacons would otherwise have to do. It is my contention that indefinite continuation of our present set-up will retard the full-orbed development of the official work of mercy in our Canadian churches. It is one of the factors the Rev. Wm. Dryfhout refers to in his letter in *The Banner*, Jan. 8, "Let's Dispense With Deacons."

Where our people are concentrating in certain localities, growing in financial strength, and becoming well adjusted to Canadian life there is also room for strong immigration societies. But these are branching out into all kinds of business ventures, sickness insurance, credit unions, mutual aid burial funds. It is questionable whether in the long run it is desirable that the Church be officially so closely connecte with these ventures as was the case the first emergency stage of our im migration work. And one naturall asks, Where is the limit? Must our "im migration societies" try to meet all th needs of our people? Will they soon b setting up old peoples' homes, youth centers, etc. etc? How long does on remain an immigrant?

Proposed Synodical Action

THE Synod of 1954 will ma out the program for 1955; therefor we need to think ahead. I suggest a few proposals for action; or at the ver least for serious study and possible ac tion in 1956 when, D. V., the Canadia Immigration Committee will be te years old.

1. Continue the present committe as now constituted by representative from the classes having churches i Canada. By all means. Forecasts ar that some 30,000 Dutch immigrants will arrive in 1954. And the policy of th Government is to encourage immigra tion for several years to come. There will be need of a central clearing office for contact with Holland and the gov ernment and others. There will be need of such an office to set an over-all policy, and to furnish advice and information. Also there will be need o long range planning in the opening o new areas. In conjunction with the out reach of the Church it will be necessary to send out fieldmen into places like the Maritimes, Peace River block, etc. where there are now no concentrations of our people. There will continue to be limited emergencies justifying emergency action.

2. Discontinue the quota for this work. Let Synod refer it to the diaconates for support where it properly belongs, as shown above. Let the Committee appeal to the deacons for gifts after the fashion of the former appeals from Denver and other places.

3. Wherever there are concentrations of our churches that have attained to a measure of financial strength let Synod advise formation of a deacons' committee to support and supervise the work of the fieldman. Such centers as

monton, Hamilton, Chatham, and uth Alberta can easily support full— part-time—fieldmen according to the eds. This has appeared from ex- ience. Some churches are already ying part of the local fieldman's ges and expenses. It is being done Central Alberta by four churches alling about 200 families. This ould result in less expense and an reasing participation by the deacons mselves. When local means are in- equate they can be augmented by osidy from the Synodical Committee.

4. In many cases people should pay the services rendered by the field- n. The members of the Christlijke igratie Centrale in Holland pay ndsomely for the help they receive om that organization. There is no ason why a fieldman should spend an ening filling out papers and giving vice gratis for people who are earn- g more than a dollar an hour. It is ry nice to have a fieldman upon ose shoulder one can sob over ubles with the boss, but if it costs oney to do so there might be more of will to solve them on one's own in- ative. And further, our fieldmen e helping people who have been here veral years. Do we plan to run a per- anent employment agency? That estion is especially ad rem when we ke into account the possibility of a ancial recession and increasing un- nployment.

In conclusion, let me repeat that this not intended in any way as criticism the work done in the past or at resent by the Committee. I have only e highest regard and appreciation for . But it is an expression of convic- ons that have grown upon me during e past three and a half years of con- ct with developments here in Canada. rue, my experience is limited to Al- erta, but the situation in Ontario can- ot be so very different. The emergency passing in reference to the work of e Immigration Committee; it is time think of shifting the machinery into igh gear—for the welfare of the im- migrants and of the Church we love, nd especially in order that we may eet the challenge of developing the eautiful work of Christian mercy rough the office of the deacons. Can- da offers an opportunity for letting is ministry come to its own.

The Mission Field of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon

by CLARENCE VAN ENS*

HAVING been elected to serve as the Secretary of the Presbyterian Mission Committee of the Presbytery in Ceylon, I immediately made plans to acquaint myself with the field and work in the North Central Province of Ceylon. With provisions, including water, to last me four days, I set out into the jungles with our evangelist and interpreter, Samuel Mendis. The well paved English highways made travel comfortable and convenient in the French Peugeot. As we traveled several matters disturbed me.

Problems

FIRST, I was sent to the field as the Secretary of the Presbyterian Mission Committee of Presbytery. Beside the anomaly of Presbytery as such (it's a sort of fellowship or federation of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches), the fact that the work of missions has been removed so far from the Church displeased me. All the General Consistory does is give a limited yearly financial grant toward the work. No reports are heard by the General Consistory. Interest is at a low ebb. Even the Local Consistories, until recently, had no immediate interest in missions. A minister of Presbytery was delegated to supervise the mission work of the Colombo Churches. Recently, however, a motion was passed by the Mission Committee placing all the work of missions in the Colombo parishes, including the work of the Women's Missionary Unions, under the direct supervision of the respective local consistories. And even more recently the General Consistory has appointed a Mission Committee to give general supervision to this vital work.

Second, my friend and brother, Samuel Mendis, was not a member of the sending church. Though he has been engaged for mission work by the Dutch Reformed Church and Presbytery for the last four years, he still was a member of a Baptist Church. We spoke at length about this matter as we journied on. We literally reviewed most of the Compendium. And we are pleased to report that very recently brother Mendis, his wife, and three fine sons, joined the Dutch Reformed Church. The three sons were duly baptized. In brother Mendis we have found a man who possesses a burning zeal to proclaim the message of sovereign grace. His insights into the Reformed faith are encouraging. Though employed by the Presbyterian Mission Committee, Mr. Mendis' complete financial support comes from the Rus families of Pella, Iowa. Rev. Foenander made this arrangement while touring the States and our Churches as a student at Calvin Seminary some years ago.

Third, it bothered me that I could not speak the Sinhalese language. Missionaries coming to Ceylon and to the Dutch Reformed Church are overloaded with the demands of the English speaking congregations. In addition to the trying task of awakening the Church to her first calling, all the regular duties of a Pastor, caring for congregations of three hundred families and more, are ours. No time is given for language study. In order to make an effort in this direction we have taken some lessons. But the pressure of regular church work makes it impossible to give the necessary time for such studies. And progress, by the nature of the case, is slow.

Fourth, we carried a sizeable payroll with us. The treasurer of the Committee requested us to pay the evangelists and the nurses for the coming month. I thought of Paul and knew that he never was reported carrying such funds. And in order to disassociate myself from finances, I requested Brother Mendis to discharge this duty.

The Church

IN order to appreciate the Mission work of the Reformed Church in Ceylon, one may compare it to the work of the Christian Reformed Church among the Indians in New Mexico. The Dutch Reformed Church is as western as any Christian Reformed Church. The members love to be identified with the foreigners on the Island. There is a strange feeling of separation between the Burgher Community and the Sinhalese and Tamil Communities. The

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latter are looked upon as though they are inferior. Though most of the Burghers have some percentage of Sinhalese or Tamil blood in their veins, marriage between the races is generally frowned upon. In fact, some families are taking their departure for other lands, especially Australia, in order to avoid such intermarriage. With the tremendous emphasis upon nationalism in Ceylon the little "South Africa" of the Burgher Community is slowly vanishing. Members of this community are no longer favored as in the days when the British ruled the Island. Their fellow citizens, the Sinhalese and Tamils, are taking positions of responsibility next to them and often in place of them. Despite this movement, however, there are several families, by far the majority, that are determined to remain in Ceylon. They are studying the Sinhalese language. Their children must master the language in the schools by government order. And this undoubtedly will be the biggest blessing for the church in her future program of evangelism. The language barrier is being removed.

But the Dutch Reformed Church of the present is a church that has not been rooted in the soil of Ceylon. She is a Western Church in the Orient. But that Church, in God's providence, is now beginning to appreciate her heritage as never before. And it is through that Church that we envisage the spread of the Reformed Faith to the Isle of Lanka and the surrounding lands.

The Mission Field

THOUGH there is an increasing witness going out from the Colombo Churches in their immediate environment, it is not that aspect of the mission work of this church I wish to introduce to you. Rather, we want you to see our 500 square mile field in the North Central Province.

The North Central Province lies some one hundred and thirty miles north and inland of Colombo. The Dutch Reformed Church initiated her work there in the year 1919. Upon the death of Robert Phair, the Church accepted the challenge of this area. In 1926 the Presbytery of Ceylon took an interest in this field at the invitation of the Dutch Reformed Church, the work now being the joint responsibility of the Church of Scotland and the Dutch Reformed Church. Shortly after this union a Mission House was built at Kahatagasdigiliya. In 1935 a maternity Hospital was built at Yakkalla. Though the home still serves the community it's witness is limited. And no charges are made for the services rendered. The folks at Yakkalla have assumed no financial responsibility whatsoever. More, a large modern government hospital has been built nearby. The Buddhist authorities do not look with favor upon Christian Institutions, even if they engage primarily in a social welfare work.

Four full time nurses are employed at the Yakkalla Maternity Home, beside an evangelist and a maintenance man. We examined the small group of believers. There was Mrs. Silva and her daughter, Beatrice. Mary and Aprou and their nine year old son who still has not received the Sacrament of Baptism, live there. Then there are the grand children of Mary, and Nimal Perera, a nurse. Evangelist Somawardena lives there too. All these are Christians. But they have no church; apparently no one thought of organizing one. And this could be the first Church in this five hundred square mile mission field.

The Evangelists

MR. Somawardena is a retired school teacher. Suffering from the limitations of the eventide of life—he is hard of hearing—the village folk find it difficult to converse with him. He does conduct daily devotions at the Hospital and directs a few Sunday Schools in the neighboring villages. We accompanied him to several of the villages; the Word was preached; and we were amazed at the ready response of the adults. Paul's method still seems to work! Several adults wanted to know more of Jesus ere we departed. But our evangelist has been concentrating on the children. He could report no converts or inquirers. No Bibles or tracts were on hand for distribution.

The following day we visited the other two evangelists. We went to their homes. In order to get there we had to walk several miles that day. Jungle paths led us to the most interesting government developments. The government is putting forth every effort to regain the land which has laid waste for years. And citizens are invited to take this land and cultivate it; the government provides neat little homes.

Evangelist Illangesinghe lives on five acre government plot. The thatc roof, two room hut, is typical of th land. He has a family of six childre His wife is a Christian. All the childre were baptized with the exception of th youngest child. And a request wa made for an early baptism. Illang singhe is a man of simple faith. He di not have a Bible in his home. Som unused family altar material was o hand, however. He did not lead hi family in devotions. The children di not know how to pray. He said he o ten prayed with his wife. No Bibles o tracts were on hand for use in evange istic work. When asked, why he di not witness to the people of the village he declared that it was no use since the were satisfied with their religion an that his family was hated enough fo being Christian. After speaking, pray ing and singing—to which several o the neighbors listened—we set out t visit the other evangelist employed b the Mission.

Enroute we visited the Mission Hous at Kahatagasdiliya. Seven governmer employees have rented the House fo lodging. The building is not being use primarily for the proclamation of th Gospel. A weekly meeting is held, how ever, with but our two paid evangelist in attendance. When I asked to see th Bible they claimed to read on these occasions, it could not be found!

Our senior evangelist, Mohotala Til likaratne, was at home upon our ar rival. He is a widower, having survive two wives. He is the father of fiv children. All the children have bee baptized. Two daughters are marrie to Buddhist husbands. Their childre have not been baptized. Our paid evan gelist does not conduct family devo tions. No effort is made to exercise hi covenant responsibilities. When I asked for a Bible, he presented me with th Mission House Bible. Since it was be ing eaten by white ants, he had take it to his home where it had been fo the last two years! After a meetin where the message of Christ was de livered and prayers were said, we in quired as to the fruits of their labors And our evangelists reported that three men had responded to their ministry Immediate plans were made to visi these prospects the following day to gether with our evangelists.

Converts

THE first two converts lived i Palipana, a village some fifteen mile

rth of the Mission House. A travable road made it easy for us to ch the village.

D. B. Premachander, a young man twenty-two years, is married to one the daughters of our senior evangel-. All the relatives and neighbors were esent to greet us. After a cool coconut lk drink, taken directly from the ell, we invited our evangelists to ing the message of God. Later we ded a few words and interviewed e "convert," only to find that he ew not the first things of the Christ d the Kingdom of God. At best, he is amenable to the Gospel. How disessed we were when we discovered at his baptized "Christian" wife knew en less. And when the children are she evidences her "faith." She does t hesitate to bring offerings to the mple of Buddha. Apparently she had ver met the living Christ.

A large gathering filled the home of nchi Banda, the second "convert." nda could give no evidence of faith Christ. But the neighbors had gathed and again we were privileged to en the Word of Life in the heart of eylon, speaking, as always, through r. Mendis. Afterwards P. M. W. eukke testified openly in the midst of is gathering. Having been trained in Roman Catholic school, he was able give a fair account of the Gospel. e urged him to come out for Christ. nd after our return to Colombo, eukke wrote us a letter requesting furher instruction. We immediately sent im tracts, instructing him to distribute e messages and to tell others of the hrist. By this method we hope to iniate that "unexhorted, unorganized, nd spontaneous expansion of the hurch."

K. Banda, the third convert, lived ve miles south of the Mission House nd about a mile inland, along a jungle ath. Here we met a man who spoke s one "pricked" by the Spirit of God. hough plagued by his villagers, he insts on confessing Christ. Already ears ago a minister wanted him to ome all the way to Colombo for bapism. But why take him out of his vilage? He has three children. He declared that if he were baptized his household would be baptized too. Could not this become "a church in his house?" We thanked God for this evdence of His Grace. As we returned o our car, we coursed the hard, dry, nd parched earth of that area. We ere reminded of the hardness of men's earts due to sin. Just as we left the jungle trail the sun was setting in a beauty and completeness that Ceylon alone can claim. We were reminded of the might and power of our Creator and Redeemer. We felt God was placing his benediction upon our efforts.

Observations

REFLECTING upon that which we had discovered on this Mission Field, several thoughts came to our mind. For thirty-four years the Church had been active in this area, yet not one church has been established. The opening statements of Rolland Allen in his book, "Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?" came to mind. "In little more than ten years St. Paul established the Church in four provinces of the Empire, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia. Before A. D. 47 there were no Churches in these provinces; in A. D. 57 St. Paul could speak as if his work there was done, and could plan extensive tours into the far West without anxiety lest the Churches which he had founded might perish in his absence for want of his guidance and support." Certainly method must have had something to do with this.

We could not suppress the thought: are our evangelists, evangelists only because they are paid Mission workers? The fact is that today all our converts, without exception, are paid employees of the Mission. Further, can one who really knows Christ refrain from mentioning his Name to his very dear ones and family? Can one remain so unconcerned for the dying masses, after he has really met Jesus? We thought of God's faithfulness and His Covenant mercies. Yet entire families, baptized into the Triune God, have all but been lost to the Church of Christ. Indeed, man's response and responsibility are undeniable aspects of the Covenant of Grace. That blessed truth apparently had not been taught; certainly, it was not understood, for it was not being practiced. There had been an evident failure to consolidate the initial gains made in the past.

And the entire hospital project has missed the mark of Missions. Though free medical services are rendered we have a diminishing number of patrons. Those who have been ministered to have not been gained for the Christ and His Church. The comprehensive, institutional method of missions has not been successful in Ceylon. Rolland Allen's remarks are to the point here too. On page 58 of the above mentioned volume he reports that Missions and Missionaries in the times past paid the pagans to send their children to Christian Schools. Referring to free medical services he writes: "This is, in principle, precisely the same thing as paying them, though in a far less vicious form. I cannot help thinking that the day is not far distant when we shall consider the offering of any material inducement as contrary to sound doctrine as we now consider the money payments of former days."

Again, we thought of the home church in Colombo. Indeed, there must be an underlying connection. Neglect and ignorance in the Home Church is bound to be reflected on the Mission Field.

Recommendations

UPON our return to Colombo we formulated our recommendations to the Mission Committee. And these recommendations have been accepted by the Committee and are now being worked out on the field.

1. That the Secretary be instructed to supply our evangelists with Bibles and tracts for use in their ministries and that the evangelists be requested to give an account of the distribution and use of such materials.

2. That the Secretary be instructed to arrange for an extended stay at Yakkalla during which the evangelists will be instructed in the Scriptures and in the use of the Scriptures in village evangelism and that periodic visits be authorized for this purpose. (The General Consistory is now aware that the only way in which this Mission Work is to be proporely supervised is by the appointment of a full time ordained minister for service in the North Central Province. Without strong leadership our present workers will never take hold on this great task of the Church).

3. That the Secretary arrange for the baptism of the adults and the children on that Mission Field and that baptism be administered only after a sermon is preached and a proper form for baptism is read.

4. That the Secretary gather the facts regarding the possibility of organizing a Church at Yakkalla for the consideration by Presbytery.

5. That a Committee be appointed to make a study of the teachings of Scripture on Mission Methods and to serve the Church with a concrete application of such teachings to our pres-

Mission Field in Ceylon — Continued

ent efforts at Yakkalla in particular and in the Island of Ceylon in general.

Our Challenge and Yours

THE first challenge is *within* the Dutch Reformed Church. The seven fine Colombo Churches and the Churches at Galle and Matura, besides the six Christian schools, demand immediate attention and care. But we need more ministers to properly pastor these flocks. With Rev. Foenander ill, due to a heart attack, we carry on with but two Burgher padres and our Tamil Missionary. And there are nine Churches that need full time pastors!

But the larger challenge is *without*. Ceylon cries for the Gospel. Our 500 square mile Mission Field is undermanned and needs the full attention of at least one ordained man. 20,000 villages are not hearing the Gospel in Ceylon today! And Ceylon's providential placement in the world of today warrants careful attention. Establish a strong outpost here and we will be, with God's favor, in a position to send the Gospel to the 600,000,000 inhabitants of the Middle East.

And our Christian Schools need definite leadership. 3400 students are enrolled in the six schools. And 151 faculty members are engaged. But schools that are allowed to drift into every direction demand special attention by a fully qualified educator. We need a man who understands the full implications of the Covenant of Grace and who is acquainted with true Christian education. And the Church is asking for such a leader.

All Ceylon needs is workers, Ministers and an Educator. The Church need not look for large future expenditures for buildings. The Churches are established. The Schools are debt-free. And the most valued property belongs to the Church. The financial power of this Community is far above any other community in the Middle East. What we need to do is to put new life into this structure.

Evidences of such life are already appearing. Over two hundred children and young people are enrolled in week-day Catechism Classes. The Sunday Schools feed on the "faith once and for all delivered." Families are returning to the good habit of regular church attendance. And family altars are being established.

Will you pray, with us, that these additional workers may soon be on the field? And that God may claim these present efforts so that a new day may be ushered in for the Church of Christ in Ceylon, including her great Mission task?

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